**In Brief**

**HISTORY: Genghis Khan, statesman**

To most historians, Genghis Khan and the Mongol Hordes who stormed across most of Asia, the Middle East, and Russia in the late 12th century have stood for little more than slaughter and pillage. But Genghis has gotten a bad rap, says Macalester College anthropologist Jack Weatherford.

The great Genghis was actually something of a modern state builder who left his legacy in laws and ideas, Weatherford argues in *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World*, out this month. Everywhere he went, he decreed religious freedom and spurred a movement of commerce and culture that connected Europe with Asia for the first time and sowed the seeds of the Renaissance. "Genghis Khan laid the foundations for medieval globalization," agrees John Woods, a University of Chicago historian.

Many of the revelations come from the "Secret History of the Mongols," probably written by a member of Genghis Khan's family after his death. It turned up in a Beijing archive in the 19th century, but until recently scholars were thwarted by the peculiar code in which it was written--medieval Mongolian spelled out in Chinese characters--and by Communist officials who feared a rise of Genghis-inspired Mongolian nationalism. The "Secret History" reveals military and administrative tactics--and some startling human details. The child who became the fearsome Genghis Khan was afraid of dogs and prone to tears. -Caroline Hsu

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